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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
ON THE *1177. d. 13.*
PUERPERAL FEVER:

WHEREIN
THE NATURE OF THAT DISEASE
IS INVESTIGATED,

AND A METHOD OF CURE,
WHICH HAS HITHERTO PROVED SUCCESSFUL,
RECOMMENDED.

BY *K*
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P R E F A C E.

THOUGH the custom, so prevalent among modern authors, might alone have tempted the writer of the following Observations to introduce them by a prefatory address, could he have effected this without inconvenience; yet, occupied as he constantly is by more necessary avocations, and naturally averse from appearing in print, he should have waved this ceremony, as well as have totally avoided publicly delivering his sentiments on the present occasion, had he not had other motives, than those of complying with fashion, as incentives to his undertaking.—These motives, as he hopes will be perceived on examining the work, were—To give a fair and explicit account of what he had himself observed in treating a very dangerous disease—By the example of his success, to lead others more candidly to examine the relative merits of certain remedies proposed for its relief—To endeavour to render more general the early employment of a very important one, which, though so highly extolled on the continent, continues to be too much neglected by the practitioners of this country—To explain, so far as

facts and observations, and immediate inductions from them, will enable him, the TRUE NATURE of the disease, and thereby to lay a more permanent foundation for rationally conducting the CURE— And from such an explanation likewise, compared with the effects commonly produced by certain classes of remedies, to shew which of them should be avoided, which cautiously employed, and which of them, and at what time each, should be principally depended on. Previous to his fulfilling these intentions, however, it may not be improper to descend a little more into particulars, and to remark, that the subsequent conclusions and directions have for some time constituted the subject of the Lectures, which, in his general Course of Midwifery, he has given on the Puerperal Fever; having been originally drawn from an attentive consideration of what others had said upon the subject, compared with what he had himself an opportunity of observing, they have hitherto in real practice been justified by an uninterrupted success: he should therefore think himself highly culpable in withholding them longer from the Public, while he daily receives accounts of the disease proving so fatal, under the care of others.—While he is so far explicit, however, in his declaration, let him not be accused of presumption, or of harbouring the idea that he is, either in point of abilities or discernment, far superior to the generality, or perhaps equal to many others concerned in the profession.

P R E F A C E.

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profession. The opinions of different persons generally vary much, relative to the same subject; and this must particularly be the case with regard to diseases, where, from the present uncertain state of medicine, scarcely any thing can be brought to a positive demonstration. That his sentiments, therefore, should in some respects appear different from those of other writers on the subject, will not seem unreasonable; and, as they have led him to such practical conclusions as have, after the test of repeated trials, been crowned with success, they will, he doubts not, be considered with candour. He should, indeed, be extremely sorry that his assertions bordered so nearly on Quackery, as to avow that the treatment he shall recommend will uniformly prove infallible; but this he can with truth advance, that he has himself never lost a patient as yet in this disease, though he has had no inconsiderable number under his care; and though at least twenty of them, who have, within the course of the last three years, been treated under the immediate observation of many of his pupils, while they possessed, from irregularities, equally debilitated constitutions with the more opulent, laboured, at the same time, under the aggravated circumstances of poverty and distress.

To avoid the imputation too of an affectation of novelty, or of being blindly led away in the pursuit of that phantom, he would have it understood, that he does not conceive either his sentiments

ments or his treatment to be wholly new; for, with respect to the former, though not fully explained, many hints to the same purpose may be discovered in a variety of other writers; and with regard to the latter, a principal part of it has certainly been mentioned, and strongly inculcated, in another publication. But still, as every practical hint, which leads to a less fluctuating mode of treatment, in a disorder of this nature, becomes of the utmost importance, and as experience daily proves to him, that a greater comparative success attends his practice, than that of some other gentlemen of the profession, he thinks himself justified in publishing the present work; and his end in doing so will be fully answered, if he is only enabled to draw their attention to a plan, which, whether considered as novel, or otherwise, seems to bid fair to check the future progress of this alarming disease. Further, though he allows that his publication does not entirely consist of new matter, he should hope it would appear that he does not obtrude upon the world a mere repetition of what had before been frequently said on the same subject; for, while he acknowledges that some similarity may obtain, both in the Ideas conveyed, and the Practice recommended, between the present and other works, yet a perfect one by no means does; and he believes that it will be readily allowed, by every candid and judicious observer, that in acute diseases, especially such as the Puerperal

Puerperal Fever, attention to the most minute circumstances becomes absolutely necessary; and hence, that though the difference should at first sight appear trivial, if leading to a more successful treatment, it will in the end be deemed important. Notwithstanding the notoriety of this fact, however, such a minute attention appears to be by far too much neglected in real practice, arising not unfrequently, perhaps, from too great a deference for authority, which leads to too high a faith in certain remedies any how exhibited; or more immediately, as the present writer is inclined to suppose, from receiving too implicitly general conclusions, and applying these indiscriminately under a variety of situations; while, in infectious febrile diseases in particular, experience pretty constantly proves, that avoiding sources of aggravation of the symptoms, and the well-timed use of a few, and frequently not the most powerful medicines, will do more towards a cure, than the blind administration of any one class, or the successive employment of all the more active remedies with which medicine supplies us. With respect to the immediate plan of the work, the writer will endeavour to be as concise as it is possible, without becoming obscure, as it is his intention that the present production should be examined only by those who are already intelligent in the profession, capable, therefore, of deciding with accuracy, and of comprehending fully the merits of such transi-

tory allusions as he may be under a necessity of making to certain established doctrines or received opinions, in order to explain more clearly the foundation on which his practice has been conducted. Though by its title, therefore, the book is said to consist of Practical Observations, yet some reasoning will, from necessity, be introduced, as no medical man, of the description above alluded to, will, he thinks, support mere EMPIRICISM so far as to assert, that reasoning, when immediately drawn from real observation, should be entirely excluded, either at the patient's bedside, or in practical dissertations; and he believes that, with a great luminary of medicine, it will be allowed, that no physician, not even the professedly Practical Sydenham, ever treated his patients without being in some degree guided by reasoning; and though idle HYPOTHESIS should ever be excluded, yet that just INDUCTION should always be admitted,—From a desire of being concise, then, he shall avoid going minutely into the history of the disease, or an enumeration of the accessory symptoms which frequently accompany it, and only in a cursory way mention those he has himself observed; and always do this with an allusion to the more fully detailed accounts given of them by others.

Practical
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PUERPERAL FEVER.

THE Puerperal Fever, in all the cases which I have seen, has been ushered in by the general symptoms of *pyrexia*, not commonly obtaining indeed to a violent degree at first, though in a few instances the shivering fit was at the commencement very considerable, and in some cases frequently repeated. In the greater number, however, the disease came on in a more insidious way, the patient, previous to the commencement of the pain, having complained only of a little numbness of the lower extremities, and a sense of cold thrilling down the back. This, in different cases, happened at uncertain periods from the termination of delivery: in most of the patients it was not till the third day, though in one woman, who was delivered in my lying-in ward, the symp-

toms began within the course of eighteen hours from the termination of labour, and proceeded so rapidly, that when I saw her, about six hours afterwards, I was for some time apprehensive of her being beyond the power of medicine. In some other instances the disease did not commence till the fourth day; and in one, did not do so till the eighth: but I never saw it come on at a later period than this, after a delivery at the full term, though I remember an instance where similar symptoms arose a fortnight after a miscarriage, immediately on a *menorrhagia*, which succeeded this, being suppressed by cold and fatigue. To the symptoms of *pyrexia* soon succeeded a sense of soreness and dull pain, rarely diffused over the whole abdomen, but much more frequently, at first, confined to the *epigastric* region; though in two instances, in which parturition had been more than usually laborious, it was first complained of, and proved for some hours afterwards most distressing, about the *hypogastric* region. But in what part soever the pain commenced, it in a few hours became general over the whole extent of the cavity; though the umbilical region, in every instance which fell under my

my care, was the most impatient of pressure, and the part where the patients complained of the pain shooting the most. As accompanying this diffused state of the pain, I always observed a very considerable tumefaction of the abdomen; a symptom which arose in my patients at a more early period from the first febrile paroxysm, than it seems to have done among those of the generality of physicians, who described the disease before me, and which always continued, to a more or less considerable degree, till the pain was greatly abated by the treatment, or a spontaneous and very copious *diarrhœa* supervened. This last circumstance took place in one woman, whom I could not see before the disease had continued above twenty hours: in her the *diarrhœa* had come on six hours before my arrival; the stools were copious, and the number of them, for the time, almost incredible. The tension of the abdomen was now inconsiderable, but had been, as I was informed, very remarkable, previous to the looseness supervening, and a vomiting which she laboured under before my arrival; a great prostration of strength had taken place, as well as a violent delirium, during which she talked loudly and

incessantly; her countenance had assumed much of the *facies Hippocratica*; she had that circumscribed flushing of the cheeks so constant in hectics, and was the only patient in whom I remarked the *red tumours* under the skin, near the joints, as described by Doctors Home and Denman. This patient could not be said to have gotten perfectly out of danger till the fifth day after I saw her, though all the others recovered entirely from the alarming part of the symptoms by the end of the third day of the treatment.

With respect to the pulse, it was constantly frequent, and, in general, had at first that quickness* and tension so observable in truly inflammatory diseases; but these latter characters did not long continue; and as to the real frequency, that I could not clearly ascertain, as, even at the time the pulse retained a character so nearly approaching to that indicative of a state of inflammatory tension obtaining throughout the habit, I always observed that the general irritability was such, that the number of pulsations would be considerably augmented by the

* By quick I mean *celer*; and do not employ the term to indicate frequency, as many late writers have erroneously done.

slightest agitation of the patient, whether this took place from noise, the sudden appearance of a stranger, particularly a medical man, from examining the state of the abdomen, &c. And this irritability became still more remarkable, as in the progress of the disease the general weakness was augmented; so that, in the patient whose case I more particularly took notice of above, I think I might safely assert, that the sudden opening of her chamber door would augment the strokes of the artery by one half. In this woman, when I had retained her hand near fifteen minutes, on the second day after I saw her, and she appeared so far restored to a state of tranquillity as to allow me to form a tolerable conjecture with regard to her pulse, I found it equal to 130 pulsations in a minute. In the generality of cases, however, I do not think the pulse is quite so frequent; and it may not be improper further to state one fact, which many are not aware of, and which I did not for a long time myself suspect, which is, that the accuracy of the watch employed in counting the pulse will always make a certain difference, as, the greater the accuracy of the instrument, the more frequent

will the pulse appear; so that, having repeatedly made the experiment, I have in very frequent pulses found a difference of twenty, and in the ordinary healthy state, constantly of six or eight, in the calculation of those of a minute, between the watch with which I examined this patient's pulse and others. That the pulse, however, is at intervals much more frequent than is stated above, I have acknowledged; so that when the patient becomes suddenly agitated, from an aggravation of the pain, or any of the causes before alluded to, it will be often found equal to 160; and I think I have under such circumstances been capable of counting 180 strokes within the minute. But these, as only sudden and transitory augmentations, are, in the general enumeration of the symptoms, not to be regarded farther than as indicating the high degree of morbid irritability which occurs.

The breathing was, at the height of the disease, somewhat oppressed, but not more so than might be expected from the state of the abdomen, and the consequent pain and difficulty attendant on the descent of the diaphragm.

The skin was, at the commencement, constantly

stantly hot and dry, and continued in that state while the pain was severe; though I have in several instances observed the tongue at this time moist, and of rather a florid red colour; in some, however, it was furred, as well as the teeth, as is common in the ordinary infectious fever; a symptom which was very remarkable in the patient I saw in the advanced stage of the disease, as well as in one of those attacked in the lying-in ward. In most of the patients a sickness, nausea, and reaching supervened in the course of the first day; but the spontaneous vomiting was not considerable in any, except that one whose case I described; and this symptom had in a great measure ceased before I saw her. In some, however, no sickness occurred, as was particularly the case in that woman, who was seized in the ward so soon after delivery. The body in all was at first bound, and the thirst considerable; the pain, after a few hours continuance, became so severe, that the generality of the patients lay on the back, and could not bear the weight of even the sheets; and in the woman who was attacked so soon after delivery, it was such as to deprive her of the power of distinct articulation; so

that she lay uttering a hideous interrupted cry, but totally incapable of answering any question. In most of the women, from the violence of the pain, the countenance was somewhat distorted; a symptom which in this one was very remarkable: and this was the only patient likewise in whom a *sub-sultus tendinum* was in any degree constant, though in most of them, and particularly that one who was so much exhausted by the *diarrhæa*, this symptom would constantly supervene from any sudden agitation.—The state of the *urine* I could never accurately ascertain; and as to the *lochial* discharge, so far as I could judge, it was at the beginning rather diminished, and in some wholly suppressed, though it never failed to re-appear to a certain degree towards the end of the disease, and, in a few, its return was attended with a soreness and excoriation of the *labia externa*. This was most remarkable in that woman who had the colliquative *diarrhæa*: in this patient, as the fever began on the fourth day from delivery, when the secretion of milk was perfectly established, the discharge may be supposed to have ceased from natural causes; notwithstanding which, it re-appeared before I saw her, and nearly
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about the time the *diarrhœa* commenced, the breasts having at the same time become flaccid, and the secretion in them totally interrupted. With respect to the state of these organs at the commencement of the disease, the women who were attacked previous to the secretion of milk having obtained, and all of those, so far as I can recollect, in whom this secretion had already taken place, complained of shooting pains in them, and soreness to the touch, attended with an evident tension; but these, after the first day, and sometimes after a few hours, went off, when the parts became quite flaccid, and diminished in bulk to a degree considerably below what we should have expected to see in the healthy though unimpregnated state; so that they appeared in some of the women as flat as the generality of persons of the male sex, even of a spare habit, are found to have them. The *diarrhœa*, except in that one patient whom I saw so late in the disease, was not remarkable; but in her case the stools were peculiarly offensive, as much so indeed as I have ever observed them under the worst circumstances of the common putrid fever; and in all, the stools artificially procured had a
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more than ordinary fetor.—When the more violent symptoms were somewhat abated, the patients complained of general soreness of the abdomen, pain in the back, throbbing of the temples, heavy dull pain at the forehead, and general listlessness. Some of them were likewise attacked about this time with symptoms of *pneumonic* inflammation, and deep-seated circumscribed pains in the lower belly; most of them had a peculiar wildness of the eyes for a day or two; and in one the disease alternated with a well-marked state of *mania*: but this was a consequence which had, in the same woman, attended on a former delivery, where no Puerperal Fever had taken place, and was likewise a common occurrence with other branches of her family.

RESPECTING the true nature of this disease, much has been written by men of the greatest erudition: notwithstanding which, I think there is great reason to believe that it has not been fully pointed out; but has, on the contrary, from its simplicity, been totally overlooked by the generality of writers, though some just hints on the subject have, I will allow, been dropped by others *. That it is nearly the same disease, in what climate or under what circumstances soever it occurs, seems agreed on by most writers; as

* Among these I particularly allude to that ingenious and elegant writer, Mr. White, of Manchester; who has positively, and with great justice, I believe, asserted, that the Puerperal is a form of the common fever; but has not, at the same time, adduced and fully stated the proofs of his assertion; and who certainly treats the complication with inflammatory symptoms in too light a way, looking on it only as a consequence of the preceding fever, to which little of the treatment should be directed, and not as an essential and early part of this form of the disorder, and one from whence the chief danger arises, and which of course requires our utmost attention.

it is found to differ only in the degree and intensity of its symptoms, or a few other trivial respects, which, though capable, in a Nosological point of view, of establishing *varieties* of the disease, are by no means such as to give rise to a diversity in point of *genus*, or perhaps of *species*. Indeed the chief difference between the various cases seems to be, that in some, particularly private patients, the fever approaches at its commencement more nearly to the type of the true inflammatory fever, while in those who are attacked in great hospitals, the debility and symptoms of malignancy appear more early, and more strongly marked: thus most of the solitary cases, described by the English writers as occurring in private houses, are of the former kind; while many of those, which they met with in the hospitals here, approached more nearly to the latter; and this was pretty uniformly the case among those which occurred in the crowded and foul *Hotel-Dieu* of Paris.— But, as the same variation, in point of early symptoms, occurs, under different circumstances, in the Plague in Turkey, and the common infectious fever of this country, which, by every strict nosologist, and most well-

well-informed practitioners, are allowed to have, each, but one genus *; so here the same conclusion may with great propriety be drawn: and whether a difference even in species ever obtains may be doubted, while we consider that a variety in the degree and violence of the symptoms is by no means sufficient to establish this; and that in all the histories which have been given of this disease, from the days of Hippocrates, who certainly had observed it, to the present time, no other difference can be discovered. If then it be allowed, that the disease is in its symptoms and other respects pretty nearly the same in every instance in which it occurs, one material step will have been gained towards facilitating the explanation of what its true nature consists in; and, in order to simplify this matter still further, I will venture, previous to adducing the proofs, to assert, that the disorder is not one *sui generis*, confined to INLYING WOMEN, but merely an unusual form of a very common disease, and

* Such I take to be the real opinion of the most celebrated among the modern nosologists; for, though two genera are given, the explanatory note seems to indicate a strong conviction, in the mind of the writer, that only one really exists.

is, in reality, no other than the common infectious fever, complicated with a more or less extensive inflammation of the *peritonæum*. This opinion, though incapable of being reduced to an equal certainty with a mathematical demonstration, will yet be rendered extremely probable, from considering,

That it is uniformly observed, that the same contagion, or infection, produces a similar disease—

That this disorder is, to a certainty, in itself infectious, and arises under circumstances and situations the most favourable for the production of the ordinary contagion—

That in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh the similarity of the cause was shewn by its effects, as two of the attendants on the puerperal women were seized with the common *synochus*—

That this is not a solitary instance, as in other places the same thing has likewise been observed—

That the converse of the proposition likewise holds; so that the two first women delivered in the lying-in ward, notwithstanding all possible care taken in cleansing and preparing it, six weeks previous to the reception

tion of any, were attacked with the Puerperal Fever to a very violent degree, from the common infection being introduced in the clothes of one of the patients; and in another instance I was enabled to foretel the occurrence of the Puerperal Fever, from a Putrid Fever obtaining in a particular house, at the same time that a woman lay in there—

That the two fevers arise under similar circumstances; and, though by no means confined to these seasons, rage most during the warmer summer and autumn months, and particularly among the lower and more uncleanly sort of women, and in crowded hospitals, where for a considerable time together it has not been possible to change the bedding, &c. and thereby to remove the various fomites where the contagion is retained—

That the two diseases rage as epidemics very generally the same year. Thus these last six months both the one and the other were very rife—

And that the Puerperal Fever is sure to be renewed, in the *Hotel-Dieu*, whenever circumstances become very favourable for the production of the common infection.

If these considerations, however, shew that

the Puerperal Fever is produced by the same cause which gives rise to the more ordinary infectious one of this country, the concurrence and succession of the symptoms enumerated as clearly prove, that it is not the common form of it which has been described, and to which the title *Puerperal* has been given; but that a real inflammation of certain contents of the *abdomen*, as constantly shewn by the symptoms during life, and frequently by dissection after death, supervenes, and complicates this.

It is not now necessary to prove that extensive inflammation is capable of accompanying *diseases of debility*, as, with respect to the common fever, Sir John Pringle and others have proved it, and, during the ordinary epidemic even of this season, every extensive practitioner must have observed that it is chiefly by such a complication supervening that this fever proves directly fatal; and that that kind of inflammation, which arises under these circumstances, is of all others the most dangerous, and the quickest in its progress through its different stages.—To these observations I shall further take the liberty to add one, in illustration of an assertion made above,

above, to wit, that the disease, is not wholly confined to inlying women; and affirm that a *peritonitis* frequently supervenes to a previous *typhus*, even in the male sex; so that it is by no means uncommon, with those who are conversant in dissections, to observe, that the appearances after death, in persons carried off in this way, are perfectly similar to those described as occurring from the Puerperal Fever. A very remarkable, though by no means a solitary instance of this kind, occurred to me about twelve months ago, in the dissection of the son of an artificer in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

What sort of inflammation it is, which occurs in the Puerperal Fever, has not been rightly settled among the authors on this subject; some, as Dr. Home, asserting that it is an *erysipelataus*, while others contend that it is purely *phlegmonous*. That an *apthous* or *erysipelataus* state of the *fauces*, and whole alimentary canal, often obtains in this disease, is very evident from the appearance of the tongue, &c. and the soreness and sense of burning heat extending through the mouth, throat, and whole tract of the intestines, often inducing *diarrhæa* at a very

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early stage of the disorder, and not unfrequently continuing when the other symptoms are in a great measure relieved ; but if, with a celebrated Physician and Nosologist, we allow that *erysipelas* can only arise on a surface covered with *cuticle*, or its continuation, which cannot extend to the *peritonæal* coat of the *abdominal viscera*, and with every accurate observer, that *erysipelatous inflammation* is not, when pure, attended by the formation of *pus*, the morbid exudation of *coagulable lymph*, and the consequent agglutination of neighbouring parts, we shall soon perceive that something more than mere *erysipelatous inflammation* occurs here.

That it is not however a pure and uncomplicated *peritonitis*, as the late Dr. Foster supposed, is evident from the symptoms of putrescency, which in the progress of the disorder never fail to appear, from the infectious nature of the disease, from the *diarrhæa* so early attendant on it, as well as from a variety of other circumstances easily observable in the concurrence and succession of the symptoms.

To give a name to the inflammation which occurs here, does not seem a very
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easy matter; nor does this appear so necessary, for practical purposes, as to point out in what its peculiarities chiefly consist. In the first place, as was hinted above, it appears from experience to be more rapid in its progress, through its different stages, than is generally the case in common inflammations; and, as connected with a disease of debility, to arise more immediately from a congestion, or *plethora quoad molem*, and an highly-increased irritability of the part it attacks, and of the whole system, than from a *plethora quoad spatium*, or a genuine increased tone and tension of the vessels which are affected, or of the heart and arteries at large. In this, as in some other respects, it resembles a *scrofulous* inflammation, which, attacking a weakly, irritable, and morbidly plethoric habit, where there appears to obtain an original or hereditary, and not, as here, a temporary perhaps, or accidental want of firmness and strength in the coats of the vessels, and of course in the solids at large, is of all other inflammations, next to those affecting persons who labour at the same time under putrid diseases, that one which most readily runs through its

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stages,

stages, and terminates in a state of abscess, or peculiar form of gangrene, the soonest.

Why, when a general increased irritability, and propensity to this kind of inflammation, occurs in the system, it should so constantly, in inlying women, attack the *abdomen*, may be very easily seen, and has been sufficiently explained by others, particularly by Dr. Leake *; and why, as attacking this cavity
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* Mr. White, on this part of his subject, falls very far short of his usual ingenuity, and is too hastily led away by conclusions drawn from occurrences in the body after death, when he asserts that the reason why the *omentum*, and other contents of the *abdomen*, in the living subject and inlying state, are more certainly attacked with inflammation, and sooner degenerate into gangrene, than other parts, is their vicinity to the *uterus* and intestines, through which he supposes a putrid matter to transude, contrary to many of the best established doctrines of modern Physiology. But it is not merely for the purpose of supporting these doctrines, that I have reluctantly taken notice of this error; it is because that, overlooking the real source of the inflammation, viz. a sudden and highly-increased determination to these parts by the preceding febrile paroxysm, he from thence is led in his practice to neglect, and even condemn, one of the most powerful resources with which the healing art supplies us, for the early relief of the inflammatory part of the affection, and, in the whole tenor of his observations,

and its contents, it should, by increasing the fever, and by being itself in return so much aggravated therefrom, prove so dangerous, if not spiritedly combated, has been hinted at above, and may from very little reflection be clearly discovered.

It will perhaps be urged, that the common infectious fever often attacks inlying women, without being attended by the affection of the *abdomen*, and the other symptoms characteristic of the Puerperal disease. This I will readily acknowledge, as having myself observed it more than once; but to this objection I would answer—that, though the Puerperal state leaves females peculiarly liable to the attacks of infectious fever, and, when attacked, to this complication of the disease, yet it does not necessarily follow, that such a complication should always obtain, no more than it does, that that peculiar type should be entirely confined to in-servations, to disregard this increased determination to the parts, as a source of danger or aggravation of the complaint; directing his endeavours solely to remove such acrid contents of the intestines as might prove a source of irritation; which, though a necessary, is certainly not the only consideration, by which we should be influenced in our practice.

lying women ; a circumstance which my own observation, as before remarked, that of the late Dr. Foster, and others, have clearly disproved.—It will likewise be urged, perhaps, that the Puerperal Fever has frequently come on when no suspicion of infection could be entertained, and merely from trivial accidental causes, such as slight fatigue, from too early exertions to entertain company, &c. But to this it will be sufficient to reply, that we never can *a priori* discover the presence of contagion ; that in-lying women are in a state the most favourable possible for its production, and for afterwards suffering from its effects ; and that the common *typhus*, which every intelligent person now allows to arise from infection or contagion, very frequently takes place in its purest form, when the source of the contagion can by no means be ascertained. Besides, as certain epidemics do at different seasons, though ultimately depending on the same cause, and undoubtedly, in most leading points, the same disorder, vary somewhat in their type ; this will account why some years the infectious fever attacking in-lying

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lying women shall assume the Puerperal, and, during other years, more frequently the ordinary type.

There is one circumstance, indeed, which, while we look on the Puerperal Fever as a form of the common *synochus* or *typhus*, may at first sight appear unaccountable; to wit, the quickness with which every symptom of the disorder, when at all relieved, disappears; while it is pretty generally observed, that the more ordinary forms of the disease require, under the most judicious treatment, a considerable space of time for this purpose. Were I inclined to indulge in mere hypothesis and speculation here, I might say that this phenomenon could be accounted for from the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, while the powers of the system remain somewhat active, being always roused to a more considerable degree, in proportion as the impending danger is greater; and in confirmation of this might urge, that it is generally the most insidious and least violent forms, at the first attack, which prove in the end the most tedious. But avoiding, as much as possible, all assertions, which are at best but dubious, I shall only state matters of fact;

which, I hope, will be sufficient to shew that this perfect relief, so speedily obtained, does not invalidate by any means the general proposition, of the two diseases being only different types of the same genus. In the first place, then, every body must have observed, that, in the worst cases of the common fever, though when fully and for some time formed, it be a tedious distemper; yet that, discovered and spiritedly combated at its commencement, it is often completely removed in even a shorter space of time than the Puerperal Fever is; and that this observation holds more perfectly, if the accounts given us of the disorder be just, with regard to the Plague; a disease, though different in some material respects, yet similar in many others to the common infectious fever. As to the truth of the former part of this assertion, were authority necessary to prove it, this might be derived from that elegant and invaluable work of Dr. Monro Drummond, "*De Febribus arcendis discutendisque*," re-published at Amsterdam in 1771.

AS to distinguishing the Puerperal Fever from other disorders, this is a matter so easily done, in general, and one which has been so fully taken notice of by others, that I should not have said any thing upon the subject, was I not perfectly convinced that it has frequently been confounded with a common inflammation of the bowels, unconnected with infection; which, though certainly a very different disease, is not at all times to be distinguished from it without considerable attention. As an instance of this, taken from many others, I may mention the case of a lady, who was said by a very judicious practitioner to be positively attacked with the Puerperal Fever; whose disease, as afterwards plainly appeared, was no other than a common obstruction of the bowels attended with inflammation; a disorder with which, from time to time, she had been attacked, independent of lying-in, and to which she had been predisposed from her infancy.—The chief circumstances which will enable us to distinguish this disorder from the

Puerperal

Puerperal Fever, are the following. It arises frequently in situations not favourable for the production of the other, as in private houses, the winter months, where the patient has been kept clean, quiet, and sufficiently, or perhaps too cool; it does not come on in so sudden a manner, nor is it so rapid in its progress; it is generally preceded by, and proves the consequence of cholic pains; is accompanied throughout with obstinate costiveness instead of *diarrhœa*; is attended with rather a slow, small pulse, which, though possessing, to a certain degree, the inflammatory jerk, is at first feeble in comparison to that attendant on the commencement of the Puerperal Fever; the fever too is more generally consequent on, than precedent to the pain, which has in this case, more than in the Puerperal Fever, the character of the *dolor circa umbilicum torquens*, and is neither so diffused and violent, nor early attended with such swelling and tension of the *abdomen* as the other is; that general irritability of the habit, whereby the patient, in the Puerperal Fever, is so apt to be agitated, from slight causes, does not here obtain; the same shooting pains at first, and after flaccidity, and other

marks

marks of sympathy in the breasts, do not arise; nor are there that gloomy and dejected cast of countenance, and timid apprehensive turn of mind, which so seldom fail to attend the Puerperal Fever.

Notwithstanding all these sources of distinction between the two disorders, still it is not always in our power clearly to establish this; but this matter will appear of less consequence in practice, while we consider that the treatment, which will be recommended for the Puerperal Fever, will generally prove rather serviceable than injurious early in the other disorder.

There might perhaps be a possibility likewise of mistaking inflammations of some of the other contents of the *abdomen* for this disease; but this I think cannot easily be done, if attention be paid to the circumscribed state of the pain in them, the evident lesion of the peculiar function of the part, the nature of the fever attendant, and the circumstances of its origin, progress, &c.—As to confounding the Puerperal Fever with after-pains, transitory cholic pains, &c. this I should think impossible to be done by any person fit to have patients committed to his care.

RESPECTING

RESPECTING the TREATMENT of this disease, if the pathology delivered be just, the following INDICATIONS are such as appear proper to be held in view.

To promote, as speedily and powerfully as can safely be done, a determination to the surface, and more equable distribution of the fluids, and thereby to remove the constriction induced by the fever, and the morbid determination to the abdominal contents—

To lessen or remove all sources of irritation, whether general as affecting the whole system, or particular as aggravating the local complaint—

By removing the debility present, and by other means, to diminish, as soon as may be, the morbid irritability, whether local or general, which appears to obtain : and, under certain circumstances, it may become necessary to obviate particular symptoms.

These indications, though they may not perhaps be alluded to, in the after-part of this treatise, with all possible scholastic precision,

cision, will, however, be attended to, so far as is necessary for the purpose of perspicuity and conciseness.

For fulfilling the first of these, EMETICS would appear from reasoning, and have been proved by experience, to be the principal remedies; but as, in complaints allowed to be at all inflammatory, it is pretty generally supposed that Bleeding should necessarily precede these, and as the propriety of employing this remedy early in the Puerperal Fever has been strongly contended for by men of the first reputation in this kingdom, it is proper here to take notice of the merits, that, in this disorder, considered in the point of view which we have done, it may be supposed to possess.

That *general blood-letting* is in many complaints a sovereign remedy; and that it is not only proper, but even necessary, in most REAL inflammatory disorders, I will readily allow: but that it is at all calculated either to remove or relieve some kinds of inflammation, I think I may, with the judicious and learned de Haen, and many others, safely deny. The injuries done by receiving too implicitly the adage, "That if a disorder be inflammatory you should bleed," are so many instances

instances of the bad consequences arising from the indiscriminate application of general propositions to particular cases; a circumstance at which I hinted in the preface; and that such injuries are capable of being done, and really are done, in many inflammatory cases, by the use of this remedy, will readily appear from the following statement. In the first place, the common epidemic cold that has, during several successive seasons, raged in this and other countries of Europe, though evidently attended, during many of its stages, with inflammation of the lungs, has scarcely in any instance been relieved by blood-letting; on the contrary, during last winter, when, though it did not prevail very generally, it was yet very severe in the cases in which it did appear, there was hardly an instance, with which I was acquainted, where bleeding was employed, that the patient did not die, chiefly from an immediate aggravation of the symptoms of inflammation, though some few lingered on, so as to fall into *chronic* affections, particularly dropsies. This was so far the case during other seasons likewise, that, about three years ago, when I ventured to bleed a strong, athletic porter, the only

only patient I ever did bleed in this disease; though the evacuation was made as early as the third day of the disorder, and the quantity did not exceed *eight ounces*, the oppression of breathing he before laboured under was much increased, and the general morbid irritability induced by the disorder so far aggravated, that he had for five days after a violent tremor of the extremities, which increased every day about noon to strong general convulsions; and the *subfultus tendinum* did not disappear for an entire week after this, though he was allowed a proportion of *mulled port wine* twice a day, took a bark mixture, and had his inflammatory symptoms pretty completely removed by blisters and repeated emetics. It is likewise a well-known fact, to those who are extensively conversant with *scrofulous* abscesses, that *general bleeding*, during the inflammatory state, will not prevent them; but will, on the contrary, by weakening the habit and increasing irritability, rather hasten *suppuration*, or lead them to terminate in that peculiar kind of *gangrene* so frequently observed to attend them. In this way I am certain I have, in more than three instances, seen an abscess under
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the *fascia lata* of the thigh brought on, which, had other steps been pursued, might have been prevented; and the same thing has been observed, and mentioned to me, by a particular friend, whose practice in this disease is at present very extensive, and unusually successful*. In that kind of inflammation, which in warm climates, particularly the East Indies, attacks the liver, it is not by bleeding the practitioners there are enabled to combat its progress to suppuration; it is, on the contrary, by the *diaphoretic* and *generally stimulant* effects of *mercury*, which, by exciting a temporary state of tone, tension, and increased action of the vascular system, enables the vessels of the organ oppressed by a congestion and morbid determination to it, to transmit their superfluous contents, and by the same action promotes the absorption of such effusion, if moderate, as, previous to its employment, might have taken place.

* The gentleman I allude to is Mr. Trye, of Gloucester, who, as senior surgeon to the infirmary there, has constantly a very great number and variety of scrofulous cases under his care, as there is no part of this kingdom, so far as I have been able to learn, where the disease rages to a more violent degree than it does in the neighbourhood of that city.

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In *erysipelatous inflammation* too, bleeding is generally improper, and seldom necessary: so far as the few observations I have been enabled to make go, it pretty constantly leads it, as attacking the limbs, to terminate in gangrene, and, as affecting the face, to spread, and attack the membranes of the brain more certainly and more early.

In many instances likewise, where bleeding is really proper, and even necessary, for the relief of the earlier stages of disorders, if pushed too far, it will not only not relieve, but absolutely aggravate the complaint. Thus, in the acute rheumatism, the purest form of an inflammatory disorder which occurs, though the first bleedings prove highly serviceable, yet every person of discernment must have observed, that when the remedy is persevered in, the pains become more severe, and the remaining febrile symptoms more remarkable after each repetition; or, should this not be immediately observable, that relapses, at least, and exacerbations are more liable to arise from every slight cause, which will not, when they do occur, yield to the lancet. But it is not in this complaint alone that the bad effects of carrying bleeding too far appear; I have seen

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them

them as evident in the common pleurisy, unconnected with epidemic infection; in this way I remember a dragoon, who was largely bled twelve times in this complaint, who, though relieved by the three first evacuations, found all his symptoms rendered worse by the subsequent ones; so that when his physician allowed the obstinacy of his disorder to be beyond his skill, the patient resolved to take his own way, and, in order to die with a better heart, as he termed it, drank porter largely, was allowed some wine, and procured for himself spirits, which he used diluted, but in no inconsiderable quantity; and from the moment he began to pursue this conduct, he gradually recovered. I likewise recollect a gentleman of high rank in the army, who was remarkably fond of angling, and, in pursuit of this diversion, exposed himself to cold, and got severely wetted; the consequence was, a very well marked *acute hepatitis*: he was bled pretty largely, and had a blister applied, by which he was considerably relieved; but on a consultation being held that evening, between the person who directed the early treatment, and the physician first intended to have been called

in, the latter did not think, on feeling the pulse, the inflammatory tension sufficiently removed; the patient was accordingly bled again, and his symptoms thereby greatly aggravated, notwithstanding which, the same physician insisted on having the bleeding repeated a third time, which only tended to render the patient still worse: he then observed to the gentleman, that, as bleeding would not remove his inflammation, it must necessarily prove fatal, and advised him to settle his affairs in this world, and to prepare for another. To enable himself to do this, he was so very much exhausted, he insisted on having some Port wine; which proving very grateful, he immediately drank to the quantity of eight or ten ounces, and fell asleep, by which he found himself much refreshed, and continued to take his wine until he recovered perfectly. In many histories now extant, of *phthisis pulmonalis*, we have direct proofs of the disorder being aggravated by repeated bleedings, and the irritability attendant on the state of inanition induced by low living, as by deviating from such a plan, and living more fully, numbers have recovered from a confirmed ulcerated state of the

lungs. This last observation, though not perfectly in point, will yet show that morbid irritability and weakness will support as well as temporarily aggravate inflammation.

All these remarks are introduced to prove that bleeding is wholly improper in some, and calculated to relieve only certain stages of other inflammatory disorders : but if we attentively consider what those stages are, and what is the true nature of the disorders in which it proves serviceable, we shall find that it is chiefly, perhaps only, where a temporary increased tone, strength, or rigidity of the coats of the vessels accompanies their increased or otherwise deranged action, and not where this deranged action is attended by a really morbid state of weakness of these coats, and of the solids at large, whether induced by the debilitating effects of contagion, brought on by inanition and previous diseases, or hereditarily derived from original conformation. If then we allow, that, in the Puerperal Fever, the inflammatory state of the contents of the *abdomen* is connected with a general state of debility and morbid irritability of the habit, induced by the contagious nature of the disease, and the
peculiar

peculiar situation of the patient; and that the increased action arises more immediately from a particular determination to the parts, and a consequent oppression and irritation of the vessels affected, without any increase of the general tone of the arterial system, or of the particular strength and firmness of the coats of the oppressed vessels, but, on the contrary, with a real weakness of these; we shall easily see why bleeding in this disease should be frequently dangerous, and why in general it should not be calculated at all to relieve it. In the first place, it is dangerous, as adding to the debility, and thereby not only immediately aggravating the chief support of the topical congestion, but likewise increasing the principal cause from which danger is, towards the end of the disorder, to be apprehended. And, in the next place, it is not calculated to relieve the complaint, as not by any means tending to lessen the morbid determination to the *abdomen* and the congestion there subsisting: further, should we even allow that, as diminishing the general quickness of the pulse, and the increased action of the arteries at large, it might, at an early period of the disease, prevent the local

inflammation from running so high as it otherwise would, I should assert, that in this point of view it would, on reflection, appear a superfluous remedy; as universal experience shews, that in the greater number of inflammatory complaints, if emetics be given immediately on the first attack, the necessity for blood-letting will be entirely superseded. Thus, in many instances, they will dissipate the common *pneumonic inflammation*; have, in Scotland, and elsewhere, by repeated trials, been proved peculiarly powerful in that dangerous form of it attacking children, the *croup*; most generally succeed when given early in the inflammatory *angina*; have considerable effect in dissipating a local inflammation, which, from reasoning, we should suppose still further without their reach, than those previously mentioned—that of the testicle; will, more powerfully than any other known remedy, prevent scrofulous inflammations from running on to suppuration, and, when persevered in, frequently conquer the obstinate and insidious inflammation attendant on scrofulous *phthisis*; and will besides, as I know to a certainty, very often remove the first symptoms of an *enteritis*,

ritis and *ileus*; of this I had ample and repeated proofs in a poor emaciated patient, who, labouring under a *psoas abscess*, was an unfit subject for the lancet, but used on every, even the slightest irregularity, to be seized with an obstinate obstruction of the bowels, attended with every symptom of a dangerous inflammation attacking them. As he would not at first submit to blisters, I determined to try every means to excite a perspiration, having often found, that, until this was done, strong purgatives were injurious: for this purpose I gave him a weak solution of emetic tartar, and employed fomentations of the *abdomen*; but he derived no benefit from them for some hours, until the medicine excited vomiting, when he was almost instantly relieved, and had afterwards stools naturally. When the vomiting began, I was somewhat alarmed, being aware that this symptom, as arising spontaneously, generally aggravates the disorder; but my fears were soon at an end; and I repeatedly afterwards observed, as he had frequent returns of the attack, that, during that state of insensibility, which immediately preceded the efforts of vomiting, excited artificially, he constantly

found ease; so that I afterwards depended almost wholly on a gentle emetic at the commencement, followed by fomentations and opiates, for his relief; and so far with success, that at length he recovered from both his disorders. I have since, from the analogy of this case, followed the same practice in some others, to which I had been called in at an early stage of the disorder, and almost constantly with similar success. These observations tend to shew, that emetics prove powerful remedies at the commencement of many inflammatory diseases, and may, of course, as before hinted, be frequently employed to supersede the necessity of blood-letting, and may likewise be had recourse to, with benefit, where the use of the lancet is at least dubious, if not wholly inadmissible. This seems to be the case in the Puerperal Fever, where, though some commend, many, and I suspect with great propriety, condemn bleeding; so that, on the whole, though venesection may not in some few cases aggravate the complaint, I believe it generally will, and am convinced, both from my own experience, and from that of the French practitioners, as well as from reasoning, that it is seldom proper, and still
more

more rarely necessary ; and, if at all admissible, it must be at a very early period of the disease, in strong, robust patients, where the Puerperal Fever appears as a *sporadic disease*, and not in hospitals, or under circumstances where its malignancy is very characteristic.

How Emetics operate in disorders of this kind, may not, perhaps, be very easy to point out ; that they determine to the surface of the body, and thereby promote a more equal distribution of the fluids, and, of course, lessen the topical congestion and determination, I have before mentioned. This effect, indeed, must be evident to even the most superficial observer, and has been, with justice, regarded by the Faculty of Paris, as a principal source of the benefit derived from them in this disease. There is, however, room to suspect that this is not the only way in which they produce good effects ; and that that temporary state of diminished sensibility, which the generality of emetics induce, previous to their exciting vomiting, has a great deal to do here. It might, perhaps, be urged in this place, that if these were the only effects of emetic medicines, in this and somewhat similar disorders, given so

as to excite *nausea* only, they would prove equally useful; but this, I know to a certainty, is not the case in the Puerperal Fever: and, though nauseating medicines prove valuable in many instances, I think I have had repeated proofs that they have been trusted to, where vomiting would have been much more advantageous; and proofs likewise that they have been persevered in, until, by weakening the stomach, and consequently the whole habit, to too great a degree, their bad effects, in the end, more than counterbalanced the good ones, the more early part of their operation produced: and, as a sort of confirmation of this matter, it may not be improper to observe, that, though children bear repeated emetics very well, and have many of their disorders thereby relieved, they seldom, if ever, are benefited by nauseating remedies, but constantly pine under their use, and have the febrile diseases, for which they are given, much aggravated thereby; a circumstance which will not appear strange, when we consider that nauseating medicines keep the sensible and delicate stomach in a constant state of *atony* and disorder; whereas emetics, though they at first excite a similar state,

state, do so only temporarily, and have this afterwards removed, and fully compensated for, by the re-action into which this organ is speedily thrown, independent of the benefits that may arise from discharging its morbid contents, which had, perhaps, proved the chief source of many of the previous symptoms. But in what manner soever emetics operate, the necessity for their employment, and the benefits to be from thence derived in this disorder, have been very fully shewn by their success in the *Hotel Dieu* of Paris, and since confirmed to me, not only by my own experience, but likewise by the observations of those who affect to treat them as trivial remedies, calculated only for the relief of certain symptoms in particular cases of this disease. Thus any one, who attentively weighs the observations made by Dr. Denman, relative to the Puerperal Fever, will clearly perceive that it was by means of an emetic alone he cured the soldier's wife, whose case he mentions as so extraordinary; and that he had constantly, in those instances where he was successful, recourse to his powder of *tart. emet.* and *occul. cancro.* which, in the end, produced vomiting: and the

the late Dr. Foster found his infusion of chamomile, early and repeatedly given, so effectual, that, to use his own words, " he did not find a disorder, of equal apparent danger, nearly so obedient to the laws of medicine : " and an attention to the observations of many other writers on the subject tends likewise to confirm the ideas here entertained of their utility. With regard to the time of exhibiting the *emetic*, I constantly directed it as soon as possible. This the French practitioners think almost absolutely necessary ; and I am led to believe it highly proper : but in that patient, who had been attacked so long before I saw her, I likewise ordered an *emetic*, and this with very evident and almost instantaneous good effects ; so that though the chance in favour of the patient be not so great, from the medicine given at an advanced, as it is when exhibited at an early period of the disorder, still it should in very few instances be neglected. There are indeed cases, where, from the duration of the disease previous to Medical Aid being called in, especially among the lower classes of people, the exhausted strength of the patient will not admit of the
immediate

immediate employment of a vomit ; but, from some cases which I have lately seen, where patients, though apparently at first extremely weak, bore an emetic remarkably well, I should be apt to suppose that this cause is erroneously urged, in not a few instances, against its employment. Another observation, the result of four cases of advanced Puerperal Fever, which I have seen since I began this treatise, is, that though the emetic, from the great debility, may be inadmissible at first, yet the relief obtained from other means is frequently delusive ; and therefore that, as soon as by gentle cordials, opiates, &c. the strength is somewhat recruited, a vomit should be given, as otherwise, though the symptoms should have disappeared for some days, they will be apt to return with increased violence ; a circumstance which took place, after an interval of six days, in one, and nearly as many in another of these patients, who had not had emetics, whereas no such thing obtained in the other two, in whom they had, in the course of their recovery, been employed.

With respect to the kind of emetic proper to be made use of, the French think *ipecacuanha*

anba a specific; but I had ample proof, in more than one case, that its effects were too transitory, and was, on that account, obliged to repeat it. In all the late instances, therefore, where I have treated this disease, I have not trusted to it alone, but have ordered *gr. xv.* of it to be diffused in a solution of *gr. ij.* of *tart. emet.* as thereby insuring the operation of the medicine, on the one hand, and rendering this less transitory, on the other: one half of this quantity was immediately given, and the other in half an hour afterwards, if the first did not operate fully. The patients drank largely likewise of the infusion of chamomile flowers, which, after it had supported the vomiting for some time, generally ceased at length to do so, but appeared to act pretty constantly as a gentle laxative in the end. When the disease was treated in this way, I never but once found it necessary to repeat the emetic, and this was in the person predisposed to *mania*, on whom the whole quantity, taken as directed, had but a very slight effect.

After the operation of the emetic, the patients were generally inclined to doze, in which they were not long encouraged, from
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my having been well convinced that sleep is an insidious state, in which, under certain circumstances, diseases of debility are much aggravated; and that the precious time, in instances of the Puerperal Fever, during which other remedies might be used to increase and continue the benefits derived from the emetic, would be thereby lost. They likewise were constantly thrown into a pretty copious perspiration; to encourage which, as well as with a view to lessen the irritation, and remove the tension of the *parietes* of the *abdomen*, which, as proved by the *phenomena* of *CHOLIC*, and other diseases, sympathise so immediately with their contents, I ordered this part of the body to be fomented with very large doubled flannels wrung out of hot water, and this operation to be persevered in for at least an hour each time, and repeated two or three several times, at the short interval of an hour*. In this way I found that
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* I have always, since I began to treat this disease, reflected with great astonishment on the laconic condemnation of the use of fomentations in it by Mr. White, and regretted that a gentleman of his abilities and information should push a favourite subject, I mean the cool treatment, to a very erroneous length. I am myself
very

the symptoms of pain, tension, &c. were very considerably relieved, and the perspiration more powerfully and effectually supported, than by the use of any *nauseating* or other

form very well convinced, that much sweating is the most dangerous evacuation to which inlying women, or patients labouring under the generality of acute diseases, can be subjected; and therefore, among my own patients, lay it down as a rule never either to promote or encourage it in the inlying state, when no extraordinary accident occurs, and even then to do so with the greatest caution: but when it is considered, that in all the instances which have fallen under my care, in most of those which Dr. Hulme has observed, and in such of their cases as are more fully detailed by many other writers, the increase of pain always kept pace with the parched state of the skin, and its relief with a moderate and gentle perspiration; when, at the same time, the great advantages are considered, which experience proves may be derived from fomentations in this disease, and others of somewhat an analogous nature; when it is likewise considered, that, as a source of cleanliness, they generally benefit infectious fevers, and as *soporific*, when extended to the lower extremities, as proved by many years experience at the Infirmary at Edinburgh, they powerfully co-operate with *opiates* in procuring rest, it will appear surprising, that prejudice should so far blind a gentleman, in other respects possessing unusual penetration, as to lead him, *in toto*, to condemn them. The principal argument too made use of by Mr. White, against endeavouring to promote or support a gentle perspiration

form of a *diaphoretic* remedy. I have sometimes continued the fomentations for even two hours uninterruptedly, being convinced that their repetition, after an interruption, is

piration in this disease, seems somewhat groundless. It is founded on an erroneous conclusion, which he entitles an *Axiom*; a term very dangerous to be introduced into the uncertain science of medicine, "that the increase of "one evacuation always produces the diminution of "another." Hence, as the *diarrhæa* appears the real critical evacuation in the Puerperal Fever, that by the skin, as likely to check it, ought not to be encouraged; but, so far from allowing the truth of the quoted axiom, incontrovertible facts prove, that it holds at best but partially; as, among others, the ingenious Dr. Hamilton, of the Infirmary at Edinburgh, clearly and repeatedly shewed, that in dropsies, *diaphoretic* remedies, and the use of the warm bath, without any unusual increase of the drink of the patients, while they promoted perspiration, augmented considerably the quantity of urine: and what applies more immediately to the present purpose, is, that the *diarrhæa*, in every case which I had an opportunity of seeing, and in many other cases now on record, commenced and continued salutary only as accompanied by a perspiration; and when this was, from any accidental cause, checked, the tension, pain, and other affections of the *abdomen*, were augmented, and the costiveness, which accompanied the early part of the disorder, renewed; or, should the looseness still continue, it became excessive and colliquative, and not critical and salutary.

not half so advantageous as their continuance while benefit appears to be derived from them. In the evening too, after the pain had been, by these, and other means which I shall presently mention, pretty completely subdued, I extended them to the lower extremities, not only as a source of cleanliness, but likewise as co-operating with the opiate given to procure rest, which, though not admissible immediately on the first relief obtained, became now adviseable. In the interval between the first and second, or between this and the third application of the fomentations, I never neglected ordering a clyster, which generally consisted of a solution of *3vj.* of *sal cath. amar.* or of an equal quantity of *soluble tartar*, either in *℔bj.* of warm water alone, or of an infusion of chamomile flowers. This, as acting as an internal fomentation, generally co-operated powerfully in diminishing the remaining pain, and as removing a source of irritation, by procuring one or generally more evacuations, proved no less advantageous. As the patients were always thirsty, they were allowed at first some weak acidulated drink, generally a little warm; but after some hours, lest by exhausting them too far

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far by the perspiration, the increased weakness and irritability might give rise to a relapse, I always allowed them something cordial. The poorer, and those in the ward, had from half a pint to a pint of good porter warmed, and with nutmeg, given to them, of which they took a little from time to time, their stomachs not being able to bear much at once. The other patients had eight or ten ounces of equal parts of Port wine and water, mulled with cloves and cinnamon, allowed to be taken in the same manner. These constantly produced eructations, and a considerable discharge of *flatus* from the stomach and intestines, by which the patients found themselves considerably relieved, and their strength recruited. At the approach of night, or after it was judged safe, an OPIATE, as I hinted before, was given: this was never very powerful, and was generally conveyed in some stimulant *medium*, as both reason and universal experience prove, that diseases of considerable irritability, dependent on weakness, are frequently aggravated by the secondary effects of large doses of opium: fearful of the consequences of these effects, even from a small dose, I generally added, as

a stimulant, not likely, so far as I could judge, to be attended with similar disadvantages, an equal quantity of the *liquor Hoffmanni anodynus*, from 10 or 12 to 15 drops of each, or sometimes 20 of the latter, besides from half an ounce to an ounce of simple cinnamon water, &c. This draught, as aided by the soporific power of fomentations of the lower extremities, which, in febrile diseases, is much greater than many suspect, generally produced as much rest as was judged proper; as in this disease I had sometimes observed, and still more frequently in the advanced stages of putrid fevers, as well as in a few instances of *Atonic Gout*, that allowing patients to sleep many hours together, so far from relieving them, constantly aggravated the symptoms, so that they awoke, not refreshed, but much exhausted and oppressed: and I am convinced, that this cause alone produced a return of the symptoms of *Atonic Gout*, in a case where I was much interested, and where the disease afterwards proved fatal. Upon the same principles as I prevented too long rest, I ordered the attendants, whenever the patients awoke, to give them a little of the cordial, as likely to prevent the symptoms of

11 weakness

weakness and irritability from increasing; and if they found the pain still continued severe, or was aggravated rather than relieved during sleep, the fomentations were again had recourse to, and persevered in as before. The next day they all took a solution of some of the NEUTRAL SALTS, generally *sal catharticus amarus*; as this, when corrected a little by the addition of some *carminative*, generally CINNAMON WATER and some syrup, was less apt than any of the rest to excite *nausea*; from $\mathfrak{z}\mathfrak{v}\mathfrak{j}$. to $\mathfrak{z}\mathfrak{j}$. were generally dissolved in a ten or twelve ounce mixture, and two ounces taken at first, and one ounce every three quarters of an hour afterwards, till it began to operate, after which they generally had repeated evacuations without a further use of the laxative. During this time they were allowed a more free use of something cordial than the day before; the fomentations were repeated generally twice to the *abdomen*, and employed in the evening to the lower extremities. The opiate was likewise repeated, with an increase of the quantity of cinnamon water, and of the *liquor Hoffmanni*, but rarely with that of the *tinctura thebaica*. By the beginning of the third day, the patients

tients were generally so far relieved, that nothing remained except a general languor, a sense of soreness internally in the *abdomen*, and some pain in the back and head. During this day the fomentations of the *abdomen* were repeated twice, and those of the extremities immediately after the opiate, as before; and the patients took some stimulant mixture, sometimes containing *confectio cardiaca*, but more commonly camphire with an addition of *spiritus vitrioli dulcis*.

In a few instances I gave bark rubbed down with *Quick Lime*, or *Calcined Magnesia*, and diffused in a stimulant mixture, consisting of an addition of *tinct. cort. Peruv.* cinnamon water, and *spiritus vitrioli dulcis*, to the ordinary medium: but neither in these instances, nor in a variety of cases of the more common form of the infectious fever, did I observe benefit derived from it; on the contrary, as not sufficiently stimulant, it appears, when given alone, in such cases, to be inert; and when taken in substance, independent of its not producing good effects, really to occasion bad ones, by oppressing the stomach, as all solids at this time do. The wine or porter, and sometimes a mixture of
brandy

brandy and water acidulated, were continued; but, till the middle of the third, or beginning of the fourth day, all food was prohibited; and I cannot help observing, that the pernicious effects of giving solid food too early to febrile patients are but too little attended to; and that this, whether allowed by the physician, or, as is more commonly the case, given contrary to his directions by the nurse, proves frequently the source of the fatality of these disorders, in spite of the most judicious treatment of the patient in other respects. By the fourth day the patients were all, except that one I particularly mentioned, so far recovered, that they required nothing more than the common attention necessary for in-laying women. I however, for a few days, continued the stimulant mixture; prevented them from getting out of bed so soon as I should otherwise have allowed them*; had the clyster, if necessary, repeated; and continued the opiate, and the fomentations, at

* This precaution, though condemned by a few, will, I apprehend, be vindicated by the generality of practitioners, when it is considered how much early muscular exertion will exhaust the remaining strength of convalescents from fevers.

night, of the lower extremities. As to the opiate, I sometimes, at the beginning, and generally the second and third night, combined it with some medicine to render it more *diaphoretic*. When this was done the first night, it was commonly with VOL. ALKALI, as I was apprehensive of supporting *nausea* too long, or unnecessarily renewing the vomiting, by employing ANTIMONIALS for this purpose. The latter, however, were the medicines which, after the disordered state of the stomach had fully subsided, I preferred, as rather more powerful in their effects; but I never continued any of them many evenings together, as evidently unnecessary, and possibly mischievous, as the fact is now sufficiently established, that sweating, if not advantageous, will undoubtedly prove hurtful during the inlying state.—I had rarely occasion to employ any other remedies, as few extraordinary symptoms arose; but was once obliged to have recourse to BLISTERS, and sometimes found *spasmodic* affections of the bowels troublesome in the course of the recovery. With respect to BLISTERS, it was only to relieve a troublesome pain of the side, and difficulty of breathing, that I had
recourse

recourse to them; these supervened, in one instance, soon after the relief of the affection of the *abdomen*, but were relieved by a blister. This remedy has by many been highly extolled for the relief of the affection of the *abdomen* in the Puerperal Fever, and is certainly powerful in checking deep-seated inflammation: but I was never inclined to trust to it in this disease, in preference to fomentations, as in the first place not calculated to support the *diaphoretic* effects of the emetic, a reason why these should likewise be preferred to EMBROCATIONS of warm brandy, &c.; and, in the next place, as I feared blisters, in a disease whose progress is so rapid, would often come too late; so that was an irritation, excited on the surface of the *abdomen*, to appear equally advantageous with fomentations in this disease, I should certainly prefer SINAPISMS; but, as wanting that power of supporting a perspiration I alluded to before, and which fomentations possess, I think neither of them can be put in competition with these, especially when persevered in, in the manner I have recommended. TOPICAL BLEEDING has of late been highly extolled, in the same point of

view as blisters, and, though much neglected in this city, is certainly, in a variety of diseases, a valuable remedy; but in this disorder, while emetics and fomentations so quickly and powerfully relieve the local affection, it would be wrong to trust to topical bleeding at the commencement, and it afterwards becomes, in general, unnecessary, and might perhaps become improper. As to the *spasmodic* affections of the bowels, which were commonly accompanied with the *globus hystericus*, they constantly yielded to a renewal of the fomentations, and the use of the *enema foetidum*; and I am inclined to suspect that the chief ingredient in this, the *asa foetida*, would, in certain forms, prove a very proper stimulant during the recovery of the patient. Independent of the use of these general remedies, attention was constantly paid to the avoiding of all irritation, from noise, light, heat, &c.: and for this latter purpose, though a perspiration was encouraged by the means I have already mentioned, the bodies of the patients were kept thinly covered; the feet indeed were kept warm, but the temperature of the room was always low, and the greatest attention was

paid to cleanliness and the purity of the air. With these views the patients had their temples and hands washed frequently with tepid vinegar and water, and this acid was either sprinkled on the floor frequently throughout the day, or evaporated in the room; the window of the chamber, when the weather was warm, if the stream of air was not likely immediately to affect the patient, was kept raised, and the other necessary steps taken for keeping the patients cool, clean, and quiet, which are pursued in the common form of fever by the greater number of practitioners.

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